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Conference Report Highlights

April 22, 1998

Highlights to the Conference Report to H.R. 1757 — Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act

Following final disposition of the Parent and Student Savings Account PLUS Act, the Senate is expected to turn to H.R. 1757, the conference report on State Department reorganization. Under the unanimous consent agreement of March 31, 1998, there will be six hours of debate, equally divided, followed by a vote on final passage of the conference report.

As agreed to by the House of Representatives on March 26, the conference report deals with three major issues:

- State Department Reorganization;
- United Nations Reform; and
- Abortion Restrictions on Family Planning Funds ("Mexico City" Policy).

These issues are summarized below.

State Department Reorganization

- The conference report abolishes the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA) no later than October 1, 1998; abolishes the United States Information Agency (USIA) no later than October 1, 1999; and abolishes the International Development Cooperation Agency (IDCA), — which is the parent agency of the Agency for International Development (AID) — by October 1, 1998. These agencies' functions will be consolidated into the State Department.

- Other features include reauthorization for State Department and related agencies; expansion of Radio Free Asia and creation of Radio Free Iraq and Radio Free Iran; a requirement for the State Department to develop and implement a comprehensive counternarcotics strategy; assistance to the Iraqi resistance to Saddam Hussein; crime fighting and related provisions; visa denials for confiscation of American property, international child abductions, and Haitian murders; authorization of the construction of a U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem and requirement of U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel; and a requirement that the Administration implement the International Convention Against Torture according to Senate-imposed conditions.

United Nations Reform

- The conference report authorizes \$819 million over three years in U.S. payments to the United Nations (plus an additional \$107 million in debt forgiveness that would *not* have to be appropriated) only after the Secretary of State certifies that benchmark reforms have been met.
- Reforms include reduction over three years of the U.S. assessment to 20 percent of the U.N. regular budget and specialized agencies and 25 percent of peacekeeping budget; requirement that the President seek and obtain reimbursement for U.S. assistance to U.N. peacekeeping activities; caps on U.N. spending; reduction in U.N. staff; creation of independent Inspector General office to probe waste, fraud, and abuse; sunseting of U.N. programs; prohibition of U.S. funding for conferences not part of scheduled U.N. activities; and reform of personnel and management.

Abortion Restrictions on Family Planning Funds ("Mexico City" Policy)

- Under a compromise "Mexico City" provision, U.S. foreign assistance money *can* go to organizations that perform abortions but *cannot* go to organizations that violate the abortion laws of host countries or that lobby to change those laws.
- The conference report ends U.S. support to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) unless it ceases its activities in the People's Republic of China, or unless China ceases its policy of forced abortion and involuntary sterilization.

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